

To: The Federal Communications Commission
From: Dana J. Woods
RE: Docket MM 99-325 (IBOC Digitalization)

To Whom It May Concern;

I am a radio listener, and am writing to express my concurrence with the views expressed by the Virginia Center for the Public Press regarding IBOC-DAB. The mandatory conversion of the AM and FM radio spectrums to digital audio broadcasting is unacceptable. I am strongly opposed to such a plan. The majority of radio listeners in the U.S. are completely unaware of this potentiality, and it isn't difficult to surmise that most would be opposed to the plan were they aware.

The doubling of the band-width for a given station, which is an integral part of the conversion plan, could eliminate about half of all existing stations, including most small, community and independent stations. Moreover, the sound quality of digital broadcasts on radios designed for analogue transmissions will be so poor that people will be forced to buy new radios, designed especially for digital broadcasts, to replace the ones they own. Though this may be an economic boon to makers of electronic equipment, it is a potential market flop for broadcasters, as many people will not choose, or will not have the financial means, to replace their analogue radios with digital ones. Of course, as the FCC is aware, the big broadcasters have plans to sell additional services which the conversion would make possible to those who can afford them, such as wireless, digital internet access. Importantly, however, even did this prove economically profitable to big broadcasters, fewer Americans would thus have access to radio broadcasts at all, and due to the widening of the bandwidth, and the subsequent obliteration of many existing stations, there will be many fewer choices for those who do.

There is absolutely no reason why a third band, separate from the AM and FM spectrums, cannot be established for digital broadcasting, and other wireless, digital services. The FCC is aware of this, and has a responsibility to the American people to promote such an alternative plan. Big broadcasters should not be allowed to diminish citizen access to radio broadcasts, an extremely important venue for news and information (and free speech), as well as for music and entertainment. Please remember that for every letter such as this that you receive, there are probably literally tens of thousands of Americans who are not even aware of this unsavory conversion plan and its implications.

Sincerely, Dana J. Woods